

# Excuse the Preface: Hemingway's Introductions for Other Writers

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*"You had to trust the people you worked with completely  
or not at all, and you had to make decisions about the trusting."  
-For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Most critics acknowledge that Ernest Hemingway was a productive writer with seven novels and five short story collections published in his lifetime, not to mention a career-long output of nonfiction pieces. But few scholars have addressed the significant amount of prefatory material Hemingway wrote for himself and others.<sup>1</sup> Prefaces are special, extra textual spaces where prospective readers assess the reading experience ahead and are offered "the possibility of stepping inside or turning back" (Genette 2). They serve a variety of complex functions: they link the author and the reader, they add value to a literary product as marketing/advertising mechanisms, and they influence potential readers by providing assurances, confidence, extra information, and added direction. Narratologist Gerard Genette explains the significance of these varied functions: "more than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext [extra textual material such as a preface] is, rather, a *threshold*, or . . . a zone not only of transition, but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public" (2). Prefaces, then, aim to get readers to read the book and often on certain terms. They frame the text proper and strategically alter meaning, intention, and reception prior to the consumption of the literary product. More importantly, the authorial preface characterizes the dual function at the heart of writing literature for publication. The function of a writer differs from the function of an author. As a private figure, the writer enacts the physical act of writing, while the public author is presented to a readership in the form of literary publication. Introductions, prefaces, and forewords offer an initial glimpse into this zone of compromise and are oftentimes used to inform readers of the business of literature. As Genette recognizes, the influence of a preface can completely change our reading strategies, and when the preface comes from someone other than the book's author, readers should take note.

Ernest Hemingway, in his dual role as author and literary celebrity, participated in prefatory spaces throughout his writing career. He wrote many of his own prefaces and introductions; prominent examples include an excised “Author’s Preface” to *The Torrents of Spring* (along with his many “Notes to the Reader” throughout the published text), an abandoned preface to “The Lost Generation/A Novel” (what would become *The Sun Also Rises*), the “Introduction by the Author” to the first Scribner’s printing of *In Our Time* (“On the Quai at Smyrna” in subsequent printings), his foreword to *Green Hills of Africa*, the preface for *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories*, and his introductions to *Men at War* (1942), Scribner’s 1948 illustrated edition of *A Farewell to Arms*, and *A Moveable Feast* (along with several abandoned fragments collected in *A Moveable Feast: The Restored Edition*). These pieces, which often blend cynicism, sarcasm, and the stock Hemingway directness, serve as reminders of the author’s occasionally combative relationship with his work, his audience, and even himself. While little has been done regarding these materials, another even less well-known section of his canon also remains under-analyzed and undervalued—the prefaces he wrote for others.

Following the publication of *A Farewell to Arms* in 1929, Hemingway wrote a series of introductions, forewords, and prefaces for an interesting cross-section of artists and writers. While some came at the request of Max Perkins and Scribner’s, others were the result of the author’s connections to figures from expatriate Paris and the Spanish Civil War and war in general. All benefited from his role as national celebrity. Study of these materials leads to a better understanding not only of the works they introduce, but also and more importantly of the role Hemingway played in framing literature and cultural productions of his day, while also negotiating the highs and lows of his authorial career and public persona. Beginning with his 1929 introduction to *Kiki of Montparnasse* (and reprinted in *Kiki’s Memoirs* in 1930), Hemingway expresses his thoughts regarding “big writing” and the work of a professional writer (15-17). Although he informs readers that “this is the only book I have ever written an introduction for and, God help me, the only one I ever will” (17), a distinctive authorial voice penetrates the piece. Following *Kiki*, Hemingway’s introductions are best separated into four thematic categories—professional writing and publishing, war, art and artists, and sports—each providing access to different aspects of Hemingway’s persona, including the author, the stylist, and the professional tradesman. Although his prefaces for artists Luis Quintanilla, Antonio Gattorno, and John Groth, sportsmen S. Kip

Farrington and Charles Ritz, and war journalists/editors Joseph North and Ben Raeburn all merit closer examination, this study focuses on Hemingway's prefaces for fiction writers and memoirists in a literary cultural context. As a writer's author in these pieces, he often elucidated the problems with professional publishing and the constraints put upon writers.

Hemingway's prefaces for others demonstrate the author's business acumen, his views on form, style, and criticism, and his willingness to publicly advise other writers. Moreover, the history of these pieces attests to the importance of prefatory material for attracting readers. Jimmie Charters and his editor Morrill Cody insisted that Hemingway's introduction would carry *This Must Be the Place*. In fact, Charters went so far as to write Hemingway that he was "a thousand times more proud of" the introduction than his own book (Letter to Hemingway 23 January 1934). Similarly, Max Perkins asked Hemingway to preface Jerome Bahr's *All Good Americans* knowing that it was important to have an established persona introduce the book and its author to the reading public. Hemingway also wrote prefaces in order to defend writers and express frustration with critics. His work for Gustav Regler's *The Great Crusade* (1940) and Elio Vittorini's *In Sicily* (1949) provides clear examples of action writing over "big writing," and both prefaces are the result of Hemingway's growing dissatisfaction with critics. Although his prefaces were written in service of the given texts, each says more about Hemingway and his impact than about the text itself. In fact, many of the book reviews for these works singled out Hemingway's prefatory contributions.<sup>2</sup>

The process of creating and marketing these pieces allowed for Hemingway's professional persona to grow beyond the confines of his fiction, resulting in a larger public role. Written in various moods and under a wide array of circumstances, Hemingway's introductions show the artist, colleague, advisor, teacher, critic, comedian, revolutionary, and statesman: the true professional writer. Robert O. Stephens argues that "Hemingway's approach to preface writing was highly personal and at first glance either ignorant of or indifferent to the several conventions comprising the art of the preface" (135). However, Stephens further explains that Hemingway balanced his "highly personal approach and comment against conventions" (135) and developed a formula consisting of the following: a citation of the artist's credentials, personal expertise, significance of the work's appearance or inception, struggle with his own status as a man of letters, comments on quality, and finally, positioning the work within an artistic tradition.<sup>3</sup> Although Stephens has constructed the

means by which one can analyze the author's prefaces, my goal is to uncover a more rigid connection between the form and the author. Through correspondence and biography, we become acquainted with the impact of these prefaces on Hemingway's writing life. In several unpublished letters detailing the creation and purpose behind these prefaces, Hemingway reveals how he produced a deliberately controlled persona that enhanced his authority, granted him greater public exposure, and allowed him to defend his positions on good writers and writing.

Hemingway began manipulating his public writing persona in 1929 following the successful publication of *A Farewell to Arms*, when the author set out to denounce criticism of his work and become the pre-eminent novelist of his time (Raeburn 33). John Raeburn contends that "the critics had made him champion with their early enthusiasm, and by creating a public personality and thereby enlarging his reputation, he was trying to make certain that what the critics had done they could not easily undo" (35). Hemingway's many articles reflect this conscious attempt to defend his positions as an established literary icon of his day and the consummate stylist of contemporary fiction. This effort required careful placement of printed material, both primary and prefatory, throughout the 1930s. Hemingway's articles for *Esquire*, for example, demonstrate his effort to manage his persona, intentionally bolstering the image of Hemingway as "rugged, virile, and self-confident" and "in complete control of himself, capable of the appropriate response in any situation" (Raeburn 35). But Stephens points out that Hemingway also "had to accept the responsibilities of a recognized man of letters" (13), and become "a man of prefaces" as much as a man of letters (135). During this period, which includes Hemingway's first attempts at preface writing, he became "more renowned for his personality than for his accomplishments, however substantial those might be" (Stephens 37). While little has been documented concerning the relationship between Hemingway and Kiki, Hemingway's first introduction, which has more to do with his image than with Kiki's text, provides an initial glimpse into the author's use of prefatory materials to create, sustain, and manipulate a public writing persona in league with his many dispatches, articles, and fiction.

Published in 1929, *Kiki of Montparnasse* collects the reminiscences of French art model and sometime prostitute Kiki (real name Alice Prin). Known primarily as modernist artist Man Ray's muse and the subject of his *Le Violon d'Ingres* (which depicts a nude Kiki with violin f-holes painted on her naked

back), Kiki was a prominent figure in expatriate Paris during the twenties. Hemingway certainly would have known Kiki, but his introduction to her memoir lacks a clear purpose as he plays with several themes, offering advice on “big writing,” “Eras,” and “the workers” (“Introduction to *Kiki of Montparnasse*” 15). What emerges clearly is Hemingway’s attempt to position himself in relation to writing and popular ideas about artistic work ethics. Early on, he notes the habit of some writers (including Kiki) to enact a specific type of “big writing,” and claims that “the essential in big writing is to use words like the West, the East, Civilization, etc., and very often these words do not mean a damned thing but you cannot have big writing without them” (15). Big writing produces hollow “Eras,” since “no one knows when they begin, at least not at the time, and the ones that are noted and advertised at the start usually do not stand up very long” (15). Hemingway considers Montparnasse in the 1920s one of these eras. The similarity to Frederic Henry’s denunciation of “abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow” (184) in *A Farewell to Arms* is clear. While Henry is testifying to the gross overuse of “proclamations” in favor of truth in warfare, Hemingway sees fit to establish a similar continuum in his introduction, insisting that “you can write very big putting those words in capitals but it is very liable not to mean anything” (“Introduction to *Kiki of Montparnasse*” 15). At various times throughout his career, Hemingway was prone to reusing material, as many writers did, and many of his introductions take the tone and substance of a concurrent text. Here, the connection to the recently published *A Farewell to Arms* leads readers to establish a comfortable relationship with Hemingway’s introduction, a comfort he could cultivate and sustain, and one that reinforced his image as a writer with a concrete style.

Hemingway continues to position himself, while also compensating for the questionable character and reputation of his introduction’s subject (Kiki), by focusing on the work ethic of real artists. He defines Kiki’s Montparnasse as “the cafes and restaurants where people are seen in public. It does not mean the apartments, studios and hotel rooms where they work in private” (15). Despite the negative tone, Hemingway reminds readers that work often came before the revelry, but it also allows Hemingway to critique artistic culture as he saw it and differentiate between “workers” and “bums” (15). Hemingway had rehearsed this cultural critique seven years prior in his 25 March 1922 *Toronto Star* article “American Bohemians in Paris,” in which he described the “loafers expending the energy that an artist puts into his creative work in talking about what they are going to do and condemning the work of all artists

who have gained any degree of recognition” (*DLT* 115). Eager to stress the importance of writing and writing faculties, Hemingway offers a distinction between writers and bums:

In the old days the difference between the workers and those that don't work was that the bums could be seen at the cafes in the forenoon. A real writer, having finished his work for the day, goes to the café with the lonesomeness that a writer or painter has after he has worked all day and does not want to think about it until the next day but instead see people and talk about anything that is not serious and drink a little before supper. And maybe during and after supper, too, depending on the individual. (“Introduction to *Kiki of Montparnasse*” 15-16)

Separating those that create (workers) from those that consume (bums) situates the ironic conclusion of an era which “passed along with the kidneys of the workers who drank too long with the bums” (16). However, Hemingway assures us that with Kiki, “we do not have to worry about her kidneys,” and segues back to the book which, at this point, he has spent little time introducing. Hemingway finally praises Kiki as a woman who “never had a Room of Her Own, but I think a part of it will remind you, and some of it will bear comparison with, another book with a woman's name written by Daniel Defoe” (17). He also approvingly reminds us that she “was never a lady at any time” (17). The playful tone and references to Virginia Woolf and *Moll Flanders* are his concession to the expectation that he will offer a critical framework; nonetheless, he mostly begs off since “the people who tell me which books are great lasting works of art are all out of town so I cannot make an intelligent judgment” (16).<sup>4</sup> Such a stance reinforces his identity as a writer and not a critic, for Hemingway always maintained his status as a writer and actively avoided writing introductions solely about art.<sup>5</sup> If his introduction to *Kiki of Montparnasse* tells us anything, it is that Hemingway pursued his prefatory role with carefully constructed and combative pieces designed to elevate work and action over contemplative reticence.

The prefaces for Jimmie “the Barman” Charters and Jerome Bahr testify to the growing power of the Hemingway name and his confident familiarity with the publishing industry. As the 1930s rolled on, his public persona gained momentum, with the *Esquire* letters, *Death in the Afternoon*, and *Green Hills of Africa* promoting the technically sound and unabashedly egotistical Hemingway.

During his most productive decade, Hemingway also wrote two slight prefaces for unknown writers. The common denominator between Hemingway's introduction for Charters's *This Must Be the Place* (1934) and his preface to Bahr's *All Good Americans* (1937) is his insistence on explaining the rules of publishing. Whether he is addressing the politics of salon culture or providing advice on how best to release a new author's work, Hemingway shifts the focus away from artistic judgment in favor of an insider's technical prowess. The business of literature dominates these works, with the authors happily taking a backseat to an established name. While neither book sold well (both are since long out of print), Hemingway's introductions spoke volumes about what it meant to be a professional author and the desire of publishers to solicit material from established literary commodities to sell new, unproven properties.

Correspondence with Charters and his editor, Morrill Cody, shows that they recognized the importance of Hemingway's name for marketing and selling their book. Jimmie "the Barman" Charters had been a bartender at the Dingo American Bar, a crucial location in Hemingway's expatriate milieu. It was there he met F. Scott Fitzgerald in April 1925 and drank with Duff Twysden (the model for Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises*). Along with La Closerie des Lilas, La Rotonde, Le Dôme, and Le Select, the Dingo made its way into *The Sun Also Rises* as one of the central meeting places in the novel. Jake's colleague Krum refers to the bar as "the great place" (SAR 44), and Jake Barnes meets Mike Campbell and Brett Ashley there prior to departing for Spain with Bill Gorton (87-90). It likewise serves as the meeting place for Hemingway's aborted sequel to the novel, "Jimmy the bartender," featuring Jimmy, Brett, Mike, and Jake.<sup>6</sup> Capitalizing on the exposure the Montparnasse café culture had received following Hemingway's novel, Charters and Cody planned the memoir, which without Hemingway's glamorization of expatriate culture would have been an ill-advised venture. In a 1 June 1933 letter, Charters requested that Hemingway write the introduction "in memory of the many times we have 'chinned' across the bar about boxing and other things" (Letter to Hemingway). A similarly themed letter arrived the following day, this time from Morrill Cody, asking Hemingway, "could you be persuaded to write the introduction to such a book? Could you be persuaded to put down a few of your thoughts about the lost generation?" (Letter to Hemingway).<sup>7</sup> These factors led Hemingway to grant them their request, and although no letters could be located from Hemingway to either Charters or Cody, one undated letter finds Cody all but suggest the author "get in a few digs at Gertrude Stein" (Let-

ter to Hemingway). The evidence leads the reader to expect a piece including both reminiscences of the Paris scene (similar to *Kiki*) as well as a personal retort to Stein's portrayal of Hemingway in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.<sup>8</sup> Raeburn attests that even though Hemingway "did not mention her by name, the reference was clear to any knowledgeable contemporary," and it initiated a period during which Hemingway frequently maligned Stein in print (63). What results is an introduction critiquing Stein, the salon culture she helped create, and her use of Hemingway's name to sell her book.

Hemingway's disdain for Stein receives ample treatment in *Green Hills of Africa*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *A Moveable Feast*. However, his introduction for *This Must Be the Place* helped initiate the long publicized post-*Alice B. Toklas* period, which found Hemingway reacting "furiously, over and over, as if he could not get enough of expressing his hatred" (Raeburn 62). While conceived as a piece intended to assist Charters and Cody with the sale of their book, the introduction, like the one for *Kiki*, says little about the book itself. Hemingway does not even mention the book or its author until the fourth paragraph. Rather, he uses the first three paragraphs to determine how best to be mentioned in a "salon woman's" memoir, for "if you go to the salon you will be in the memoirs; that is you will be if your name ever becomes known enough so that its use, or abuse, will help the sale of the woman's book" ("Introduction to *This Must Be the Place*" 27). Hemingway purposefully attached himself to many projects and allowed his name to be used for marketing and publicity, but he disliked moments when his name was used without his consent. Hemingway did not choose to be in Stein's memoir, and he lacked control over how he is represented in it. In Charters's book, Hemingway has some control over how his name is used, and he takes the opportunity to vindicate his name after Stein's "abuse." He would play at this vindication for several years and within several works, forcibly retrieving the rights to his own name. Raeburn marks this piece as the moment when "his readers would decide who was telling the truth" (63), as Hemingway pits Stein's portrayal against his own. He calls her book "the pantheon to her own glory that every self-made legendary woman hopes to erect with her memoirs" ("Introduction to *This Must Be the Place*" 27) and critiques her penchant for favoritism and exclusivity. He also ironically advises readers "how to achieve a lengthy mention [in a memoir], if you want one" by noting, "you must start young. Literary ladies like them young or famous; and not too famous and famous in some other line" (28). Three-quarters of the preface is dedicated to attacking Gertrude Stein, and



he segues to Charters by relaying that the barman “served more and better drinks than any legendary woman ever did in her salon” and gave “less and better advice” (28). Although both Charters and Stein have written memoirs, Hemingway concludes that Charters’s work does less damage, and therefore his book offers a more honest look at Paris in the twenties. Charters’s work was his bartending, and because he was able to serve “more and better drinks than any legendary woman ever did” (28), Hemingway is able to endorse the exploits of a simple barman over the artistic creation of a complex memoirist like Stein. Hemingway considers Charters’s advice—“You should go home, sir. Shall I get a taxi?”—better than anything Stein has to offer (28). Just as he strove to avoid aestheticism within *Kiki*, Hemingway avoids artistic judgments and instead reduces Stein to the level of a barkeep.

In contrast to his work for Charters, Hemingway’s association with Jerome Bahr centers solely on the business of authorship. Bahr, brother-in-law to artist and Hemingway friend Waldo Peirce, had initially written Hemingway requesting a letter of recommendation for a \$1,000 Houghton Mifflin Fellowship for purposes of finishing a first book. On 21 January 1936, Bahr wrote Hemingway that he had recently sold “a long story of a Polish priest which follows somewhat your construction in *The Undeclared and Fifty Grand*” and hoped that the author could vouch for his character and ability (Letter to Hemingway). Hemingway submitted a letter on Bahr’s behalf, and Houghton Mifflin wanted to read Bahr’s book soon after. Bahr thanked Hemingway on 1 May: “I want to thank you for this. I want to thank you also for consenting to do a preface for me if I sell the book. But more than anything I want to tell you I’m damn glad you liked my writing” (Letter to Hemingway). In recommending Bahr, Hemingway had offered his services in writing a preface should the book be published. Although Houghton Mifflin had Bahr under consideration for their fellowship, his agent had also sent the manuscript to Max Perkins, evidenced by the editor’s 9 May letter to Hemingway. Upon receiving the manuscript, Perkins wrote Hemingway about the possibility of publishing and promoting Bahr.

In the 9 May 1936 letter, Perkins is forthright in asking Hemingway his feelings on Bahr’s position as a first-time author. Perkins was always concerned with the viability of short story collections in a market built for novels. The economic realities of the publishing business merited such concern. Short story collections were rarely best sellers, and authors were encouraged to begin their careers with a novel rather than a collection. Interestingly, Perkins may

have endorsed a Hemingway preface because *In Our Time* was his first major publication, not a novel. Even so, Perkins sees the issue coming: “of course there will be the objection that stories, a first book of them, are almost impossible to sell, but the man has to get started” (Letter to Hemingway). This conceit is mirrored early on in Hemingway’s preface, as he reminds readers that for a young writer, “the only way you can get a book of stories published now is to have some one with what is called, in the trade, a name write a preface to it” (“Preface” vii). Earlier Hemingway had satirized the idea of being a literary property in “The Sights of Whitehead Street: A Key West Letter” for *Esquire* (April 1935), in which he tells an unnamed visitor, “the name’s sort of like a trade-mark” (BL 195). The impossibility of selling short fiction as a first authorial effort allows Hemingway to comment publicly on the difficult mechanism of publication. Should a name be offered, Bahr’s stories have a better chance at selling. If he were to write a novel first, the name, though helpful, would not be necessary, for novels carried more weight than a collection of short fiction. Given this reality, the book’s first edition dust jacket (created by Waldo Peirce) prominently featured the words “Introduction by Ernest Hemingway” (Bahr jacket). In the introduction, Hemingway explains that the publication of new authors presents a range of economic issues rarely recognized by the general reading public. Where Hemingway had attacked Gertrude Stein in his preface for Charters’s book, here he turns his critical eye again (as did Perkins) on the means by which writers become published authors.

Hemingway’s finished preface reads as a microcosm of the publishing industry and his own composition process following the disappointing sales of several works in the middle thirties. Perkins consistently pushed for Hemingway to produce a novel following the relatively dismal sales of *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), *Winner Take Nothing* (1933), and *Green Hills of Africa* (1935), two nonfiction books and a short story collection. As he wrote Bahr’s preface, Hemingway was continuing work on what would become *To Have and Have Not* (1937), an experimental book which he characterized as “that thing the pricks all love—a novel—” (Bruccoli, *Only Thing* 244).<sup>9</sup> Hemingway’s dissatisfaction with the publication expectations of a professional author (even one as popular as he) inevitably led to his attitude throughout the Bahr preface, an attitude he had partially rehearsed in his letters for *Esquire*. Although he begins his preface with an admonishment of prefaces (“These stories need no preface” [“Preface” vii]), Hemingway constructs an analytical frame where he gives readers insight into the mechanisms and considerations behind the

rough business of publishing, including the need to have a recognized author recommend new work and the dangers of beginning a literary career with a short story collection. After reading and approving Hemingway's preface, Perkins wrote on 18 February 1937, "the preface for Bahr seemed to me excellent,- much better than if it had all been given over to high praise of the stories.- And what you said about them carries conviction. It should be much more effective than a eulogy" (Letter to Hemingway). The preface relies more on economics than literary praise, a theme set up early on with *Kiki* and *This Must Be the Place*. Hemingway's concerns are business in action and professional writing in action. For him, "a novel, even if it fails, is supposed to sell enough copies to pay for putting it out. If it succeeds, the publisher has a property, and when a writer becomes a property he will be humored considerably by those who own the property" ("Preface" vii). Attention to publishing dynamics, rather than Bahr's stories, alters our understanding of the industry. Hemingway had publicly given similar literary advice earlier in "Monologue to the Maestro: A High Seas Letter," which appeared in *Esquire* (October 1935): "Most live writers do not exist. Their fame is created by critics who always need a genius of the season, someone they understand completely and feel safe in praising, but when these fabricated geniuses are dead they will not exist" (BL 218). Authors (and their books) are created through compromise and criticism, which tends to swallow up younger writers, as "many natural, good story writers lose their true direction by having to write novels before they are ready to if they want to earn enough at their trade to eat; let alone to marry and have children" ("Preface" vii). Hemingway's cogent distillation of the profession hearkens to William Charvat's definition of professional authorship some thirty years later, in which professional writing "provides a living for the author, like any other job; that it is a main and prolonged, rather than intermittent or sporadic, resource for the writer" (3). Hemingway shows readers how the sausage gets made, and in doing so he adds literary credence to Jerome Bahr's initial authorial effort.

Hemingway knows that a writer will be humored by his publisher "as long as he continues to make them money, and sometimes for a long time afterwards on the chance that he will produce another winner" ("Preface" vii). Hemingway wrote *To Have and Have Not* with the hope that it would rebound his somewhat floundering literary output of the middle thirties, a hope Perkins shared. Author and editor perceived its release as a failure, although Robert Trogdon notes that "a sale of over 37,000 copies within seven months was very good for the 1930s" (185).<sup>10</sup> Even so, prior to his novel's release, Heming-

way's relative disillusionment with the process spilt over into his preface. We see this disillusionment in perhaps the most crucial metaphor of the introduction: Hemingway's comparison between publishing and boxing. In particular, he emphasizes the dangers to young fighters developing their skills: "the same system by which young prizefighters are overmatched and destroyed because their managers need the money that the fight, which the fighter does not yet know enough to win, will bring" (viii). Comparing the writer to the boxer reinforces Hemingway's style and continues the aversion to literary elitism visible throughout his prefaces. At the same time, Hemingway emerges as a practical artist, able to determine the value of art as product rather than celebrating art for art's sake. The system destroys as many writers as it creates, and Hemingway was keenly aware of his role in Bahr's publishing efforts: a creator, not a destroyer. In the end, Hemingway apologizes to Bahr's readers "for the economic necessity of pointing out qualities that would be perceived without any pointing" and asks them to "excuse the preface" altogether (viii). Categorizing his preface as a publishing need rather than a simple act of friendship positions one final time the importance Hemingway put on understanding the publishing industry and how that industry controlled its literary properties.

Issues of control and literary merit are also at the heart of Hemingway's prefaces for Gustav Regler and Elio Vittorini, two authors in need of a name to push their books. Hemingway continues his efforts to define his persona and his writing as vigorous and authentic by emphasizing his authority as both war correspondent/writer and late career man of letters and culture. Regler, a German Communist writer (disillusioned, he would defect from the party following the war) and commissar of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, helped recruit Hemingway to the Loyalist cause (Thomas 443). Hemingway spent significant time with Regler and the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade during spring 1937, documenting the war effort with Joris Ivens for *The Spanish Earth*. Scott Donaldson notes that Regler and the other officers of the brigade treated Hemingway "as a fellow soldier and as an artist," and the author "basked in the warmth of their comradeship" (391). Alex Vernon observes that Hemingway disparaged many of the officers he encountered during the war, but praised Regler for his attention to duty (68). When Regler was gravely wounded during the Huesca offensive of May 1937, Hemingway allegedly wept (as he states in the preface). Italian writer Elio Vittorini's 1941 novel, *Conversations in Sicily*, is a dream-like, modernist allegory highly critical of fascist Italy. Due to its content, the novel was censored by the Fascist Italian government

but eventually re-released in 1949 (as *In Sicily*) with Hemingway's preface. The two authors were not close, but Hemingway's participation helped launch the novel for an American readership. Both Regler and Vittorini were well served by Hemingway's prefaces, as their works cultivated the continued obsession with action and truth that Hemingway professed. Written nine years apart, both mark interesting moments in Hemingway's writing career. As much as *To Have and Have Not* and his *Esquire* letters informed his preface for Jerome Bahr, Hemingway's authorial confidence surrounding his Spanish Civil War novel permeates the framework of his preface to Regler's *The Great Crusade*, which was published the same year as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). In his preface to Vittorini's *In Sicily*, Hemingway continues his efforts to demean literary critics and their work as derivative as opposed to the vital work of authors. He also prophetically presupposes the critical backlash to *Across the River and Into the Trees*, published one year later. His work for Vittorini book-ends his writing for other writers; within twenty years, Hemingway had grown from the young, brash author of *A Farewell to Arms* to the experienced man of culture depended upon to promote ale, pens, and Italian reprints to a mass public. The shift signifies the growing authorial duties Hemingway undertook as writer and celebrity from the middle of his career onward.

Hemingway's preface to Gustav Regler's novel positions both authors as men of action. He opens with a passage indicative of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, explaining, "the one who being beaten refuses to admit it and fights on the longest wins in all finish fights; unless of course he is killed, starved out, deprived of weapons or betrayed. All of these things happened to the Spanish people. They were killed in vast numbers, starved out, deprived of weapons and betrayed" ("Preface to *The Great Crusade*" 81). Hemingway reinforces the lost ideal, which he notably expands in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and he instructs readers to trust Regler's account. Immediately, Hemingway informs readers, "no one has more right to write of these actions which saved Madrid than Gustav Regler. He fought in all of them" (81). Linking Regler's right to write to his military duty, Hemingway firmly establishes the action-oriented writer/author, capable of providing readers with truths based on real experience. Hemingway's praise for Regler's abilities was likely strengthened by the latter's role as houseguest of the Hemingways during its composition (Vernon 156). With both novelists writing Spanish Civil War books under the same roof in Key West, a confluence of ideas certainly fueled their work and enhanced their friendship. Taking time away from his novel to write the preface for Regler,

Hemingway, as in previous prefaces, writes little about the novel. In this case, he focuses on its author and his cause as well as their personal relationship. As a result, this preface becomes a personal reminiscence, with Hemingway relating several “inside” anecdotes involving Regler and “the religious order” of the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade (Donaldson 445).<sup>11</sup> He notes that it was his privilege to cover the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Brigades “a good part of this time” and specifically references the “spitting test,” the idea that “you cannot spit if you are really frightened” (“Preface to *The Great Crusade*” 82), which also occurs in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The emotional state of war is at the heart of the preface, as Hemingway asserts:

there is no man alive today who has not cried at a war if he was at it long enough. Sometimes it is after a battle, sometimes it is when someone that you love is killed, sometimes it is from a great injustice to another, sometimes it is at the disbanding of a corps or a unit that has endured and accomplished together and now will never be together again. (83)

He shares details of Regler’s experience that anchor the authenticity of his fiction, discussing his war injuries where “a pound and a half piece of steel drove through Gustav’s body from side to side” (83). He also cites Regler’s continued perseverance, arguing “he has, intelligently and unselfishly, the same bravery and immunity to personal suffering that a fighting cock has, which, wounded repeatedly, fights until it dies” (83). As Stephens points out, Hemingway believed Regler had earned his authority to write this book, and Hemingway (through action) had earned his right to comment (136).

The right to write lifts this preface beyond the novel itself. Beginning with his preface for Bahr, Hemingway is deeply concerned with the authentication of writing. The writer must adhere to principal and truth, and his ideas must be rooted in action in order to achieve clarity of purpose. The linkage of action, knowledge, and experience with writing meant that “beyond all politics, a man finally must do his duty, just as a writer must write” (Reynolds 304). *For Whom the Bell Tolls* represented Hemingway’s fusion of these ideals with writing, a fusion he reinforces for Regler: “But there are events which are so great that if a writer has participated in them his obligation is to try and write them truly rather than assume the presumption of altering with invention” (“Preface to *The Great Crusade*” 84). Even though “the greatest novels are all made-up” (84), Hemingway celebrates Regler (and himself) for creating from

real events a representation as close to realistic feeling as possible. His contradictory message—giving himself credit for invention and Regler praise for experience—finds Hemingway expressing the potential of his own Spanish Civil War novel. Alex Vernon asks and considers: “Does Hemingway imagine his novel will be a tour-de-force? His own status as participant-observer in the war, a status reinforced through the rest of the preface, ambiguously and maybe anxiously marks the book’s nature and potential” (156). If, as in *Green Hills of Africa*, there were a fourth or fifth dimension to writing (GHOA 26), Hemingway reinforces that “it is events of this importance that have produced Regler’s book” (“Preface to *The Great Crusade*” 84); the same important events would produce Hemingway’s bestselling novel. Hemingway achieved a critical artistic nexus with *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a point he deftly considered by commenting on his novel’s potential in the preface for another.

As each preface has shown, Hemingway’s concern with his writing career merged seamlessly into his writing for others, and he frequently defended the importance of writing in the face of critical scrutiny. Hemingway was writing *Across the River and Into the Trees* in 1949, and his introduction to Elio Vittorini’s *In Sicily* all but anticipates the eventual critical backlash heaped upon the novel once released in 1950; it also continues his dedication to active art over idle criticism in perhaps his strongest language to date. In many ways, his final published preface for another writer considers the power of literary authority in a contentious literary landscape. Most telling is his attention to critics as dust upon the earth, an “Academic” America/Italy that “periodically attacks all writing like a dust storm and is always, until everything shall be completely dry, dispersed by rain” (“Introduction to *In Sicily*” 102). He characterizes New York literary reviews (and reviewers) as “dry and sad, inexistent without the water of their benefactors, feeding on the dried manure of schism and the dusty taste of disputed dialectics, their only flowering a desiccated criticism as alive as stuffed birds, and their steady mulch the dehydrated cuds of fellow critics” (103); opposed to these reviewers are the “good writers,” made of “knowledge, experience, wine, bread, oil, salt, vinegar, bed, early mornings, nights, days, the sea, men, women, dogs, beloved motor cars, bicycles, hills and valleys, the appearance and disappearance of trains on straight and curved tracks, love, honor and disobey” (103). These natural elements bring life to the dry country, creating for Hemingway a stimulant which encourages literary growth. He heralds Vittorini for “his ability to bring rain with him when he comes if the earth is dry and that is what you need” (103) and assures readers that “if there

is any rhetoric or fancy writing that puts you off at the beginning or the end just ram through it. Remember he wrote the book in 1937 under Fascism and he had to wrap it in a fancy package. It is necessarily wrapped in cellophane to pass the censor" (103). Since Hemingway finds Vittorini's politics "honorable," he rewards the author with a preface that promotes life against death, growth against stagnation, writing against criticism.

The importance lies in Hemingway's use of natural metaphors to describe writers and unnatural metaphors to describe critics. He had critiqued fakery and dishonest writing in *Green Hills of Africa* a decade earlier, calling New York writers (and critics) "angleworms in a bottle, trying to derive knowledge and nourishment from their own contact and from the bottle" (GHOA 21); these writers suffer from writing "when there is nothing to say or no water in the well" (23). Criticism feeds on art and exerts pressure on authors, and those authors "read the critics and they must write masterpieces. The masterpieces the critics say they wrote. They weren't masterpieces, of course. They were just quite good books. So now they cannot write at all. The critics have made them impotent" (24). Critics render the natural writing process sterile, and given the upcoming publication of *Across the River and Into the Trees*, we can read his introduction to *In Sicily* as preparation for critical reaction. We can also read it as a piece on par with his other work critical of literary critics. Whether this piece was written solely to promote Vittorini's reprint or as a call for readers to stick with Hemingway regardless of critical favor, the introduction to *In Sicily* highlights the importance of writing in the midst of critical uncertainty. Rain and growth must win out over dryness and death, his active, natural metaphors populating pages in the face of critics' unnatural, artificial tomes. The organic force of writing combats any critical onslaught, and the rain inevitably comes and nourishes the dry country.

For Hemingway writing meant action, and nowhere were his comments on active writing qualities more apparent (and reinforced) than in his introductions for other authors. Hemingway sides squarely with the writer over the critic, the creator over the consumer, and the active over the idle, and in this unique prefatory space Hemingway was able to create a battleground where the efforts of good writing could always win out over critical trends. Therefore, we should not excuse Hemingway's prefaces, for his craft, talent, and knowledge of literary publication attune readers to the functions of authorship in his time, with control over literary value at stake from his first preface to his last.



## NOTES

The research required for this article was supported by the Ernest Hemingway Foundation & Society (Lewis-Smith-Reynolds Founders Fellowship) and by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation (Hemingway Research Grant), both awarded in 2014.

1. I am greatly indebted to two works that partially analyze Hemingway's prefaces: Robert O. Stephens's *Hemingway's Nonfiction: The Public Voice* and John Raeburn's *Fame Became of Him: Hemingway as Public Writer*.
2. Reviews for *All Good Americans* in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (21 March 1937) and *The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (28 May 1937) begin with invoking Hemingway's preface, for better or worse. A review in the *New York Sun* (11 December 1940) cites the influence *For Whom the Bell Tolls* had on Regler's *The Great Crusade*, while mentioning Hemingway's preface.
3. See "The Man of Letters" (Part Two, Chapter VI) in Stephens's *Hemingway's Nonfiction*.
4. Woolf wrote a negative review of Hemingway's 1927 short story collection *Men Without Women*, probably prompting the author to get back at her in print (similar to his continued barbs aimed at Stein). See Woolf's "An Essay in Criticism." *New York Herald Tribune Books* 4 Oct. 1927: 1, 8.
5. See Chapter Five of Raeburn's *Fame Became of Him*.
6. See Items 530 (9pp. manuscript) and 530a (6pp. revised typescript). Story and Fragment Manuscripts. Ernest Hemingway Collection. JFK.
7. A letter from L.E. Pollinger to Morrill Cody discusses the book's Canadian rights, including an offer which reads: "This offer is made on the understanding that Ernest Hemingway will be doing an Introduction for the book." The book's Canadian rights hinged solely on Hemingway's introduction, exactly the intent Cody and Charters intended when requesting he write the piece (Pollinger to Cody. [19 January 1934]. Ernest Hemingway Collection. JFK.)
8. Stein attempts to re-establish her and Sherwood Anderson's influence on Hemingway's writing career, as Hemingway had lampooned them openly in *The Torrents of Spring* seven years earlier. Stein (as Alice) famously proclaims that Hemingway "looks like a modern and he smells of the museums" and "was yellow, he is, Gertrude Stein insisted, just like the flat-boat men on the Mississippi river as described by Mark Twain. But what a book, [Stein and Sherwood Anderson] both agreed, would be the real story of Hemingway, not those he writes but the confessions of the real Ernest Hemingway...What a story that of the real Hem, and one he should tell himself but alas he never will. After all, as he himself once murmured, there is the career, the career" (Stein 265-66).
9. Reynolds refers to *To Have and Have Not* as "an ambitious, complicated plan, a *War and Peace* in miniature" (233). Such qualification leads to reading Hemingway's preface to *All Good Americans* as a reaction to complications arising from his own writing.
10. *To Have and Have Not* sold better than any other Hemingway book published that decade (Trogdon 185).
11. In his autobiography, *The Owl of Minerva* (1960), Regler recalls an exchange with Hemingway in which the author (probably drunk) accosted him about leaving the Communists. This revisionist depiction stands in contrast to the anti-Communist stance in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; there may be some middle ground here, as Reynolds notes, "Although Hemingway would never be a communist any more than he would support any political party, his support for the leftist Republican government of Spain was the strongest political statement of his life thus far" (*Hemingway: The*

1930s 261). Another revised account of the Regler-Hemingway relationship is found in Stephen Koch's *The Breaking Point: Hemingway, Dos Passos, and the Murder of Jose Robles* (2005), in which Regler acts as one of Hemingway's handlers during the war: "The business of keeping Hemingway seeing and saying what the Popular Front wanted him to see and say was in the hands of these three apparatchiks: Kolstov as mentor, Ivens as collaborator, and Regler as friend" (Koch 99). This reduction has been disputed, with Donaldson noting, "Koch undervalued his man, who may have been mistaken but was nobody's fool" (399).

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